

7

CURSORY OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

4

P O E M S

ATTRIBUTED TO

THOMAS ROWLEY, *(Hollist)*

A PRIEST of the Fifteenth Century :

WITH

SOME REMARKS

On the COMMENTARIES on those Poems,
by the Rev. Dr. JEREMIAH MILLES, Dean of
Exeter, and JACOB BRYANT, Esq;

AND

A SALUTARY PROPOSAL

Addressed to the Friends of those Gentlemen.

THE SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND AUGMENTED.

Ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat? HOR.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. NICHOLS ; and sold by J. WALTER, Charing
Cross ; R. FAULDER, New Bond-street ; J. SEWELL, Corn-
hill ; and E. NEWBERRY, Ludgate-street.

M.DCC.LXXXII.

[Price One Shilling and Six-Pence.]

CURSORY OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

B O E M S

ATTACHED TO

THOMAS ROWLEY

A BARRISTER OF THE KING'S BENCH

WITH

SOME REMARKS



OF THE COMMONS OF GREAT BRITAIN
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED
BY MR. JAMES WILKINS, BARRISTER AT LAW

A SALUTARY PROPOSAL

ADDRESSED TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

IN THE YEAR 1790

By JAMES WILKINS, BARRISTER AT LAW

Printed by J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD

L O N D O N

Printed by J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD
In the Strand, near the Theatre Royal
By J. JOHNSON, BARRISTER AT LAW

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Observations having met with a more favourable reception than so hasty an Essay had any title to claim, I have endeavoured to render them less imperfect by a revision, and by adding such new remarks as a more attentive examination of a very copious subject has suggested.

In the discussion of any other question, I should have treated the gentlemen whose arguments I have endeavoured to confute, with that ceremonious respect to which Literature is entitled from all her sons. "A commentator (as the most judicious critick of the present age has observed) should be grave;" but the cause of Rowley, and the mode in which it has been supported, are "too risible for any common power of face."

January 31, 1782.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE following Observations having met with a more favourable reception than I daily an Essay had any title to claim, I have endeavoured to render them less imperfect by a revision, and by adding such new remarks as a more extensive examination of a very copious MS. has suggested.

In the discussion of any other question, I should have treated the gentleman whose arguments I have endeavoured to confute, with that consideration respect to which I forbore to enter. I should not have done so, as the most judicious critic of the present age has observed, "should be given," but the cause of Honour, and the mode in which it has been supported, are too noble for any common power of force."

London, 25. 1782.

CURSORY OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

P O E M S

ATTRIBUTED TO

THOMAS ROWLEY.

NEVER surely was the course marked out by our great Satirist—*And write about it, Goddess, and about it*—more strictly followed, than in the compositions which the present *Rowleiomania* has produced. Mercy upon us! Two octavo volumes and a huge quarto, to prove the forgeries of an attorney's clerk at Bristol in 1769, the productions of a priest in the fifteenth century!—Fortunate Chatterton! What the warmest wishes of the admirers of the greatest Genius that England ever produced have not yet effected, a magnificent and accurate edition of his works, with notes and engravings, the product of thy fertile brain has now obtained.—It is almost needless to say, that I allude to two new publications by Mr. Bryant, and the Dean of Exeter;—in the *modest* title of one of which, *the authentic*

city of the poems attributed to Thomas Rowley is said to be *ascertained*; the other gentleman indeed does not go so far—he only *considers and defends their antiquity*.—Many persons, no doubt, will be deterred by the size of these works from reading them. It is not, however, so great as they may imagine; for Mr. Bryant's book is in fact only a moderate octavo, though by dextrous management it has been divided into two volumes, to furnish an excuse (as it should seem) for demanding an uncommon price. Bulky, however, as these works are, I have just perused them, and entreat the indulgence of those who think the discussion of a much controverted literary point worth attention, while I lay before them some observations on this inexhaustible subject.

And, first, I beg leave to lay it down as a fixed principle, that the authenticity or spuriousness of the poems attributed to Rowley cannot be decided by any person who has not a *taste* for English poetry, and a moderate, at least, if not a critical, knowledge of the compositions of most of our poets from the time of Chaucer to that of Pope. Such a one alone is, in my opinion, a competent judge of this matter; and were a jury of twelve such persons empaneled to try the question, I have not the smallest doubt what would be their almost instantaneous decision. Without this critical knowledge and taste, all the Saxon literature that can be employed

ployed on this subject (though these learned gentlemen should pour out waggon instead of cart-loads of it,) will only puzzle and perplex, instead of illustrating, the point in dispute. Whether they are furnished with any portion of this critical taste, I shall now examine. But that I may not bewilder either my readers or myself, I will confine my observations to these four points. 1. The versification of the poems attributed to Rowley. 2. The imitations of modern authours that are found in them. 3. The anachronisms with which they abound. 4. The hand-writing of the Mss.—the parchments, &c.

I. It is very obvious, that the first and principal objection to the antiquity of these poems is the smoothness of the versification. A series of more than three thousand lines, however disfigured by old spelling, flowing for the most part as smoothly as any of Pope's—is a difficult matter to be got over. Accordingly the learned Mythologist, Mr. Bryant, has laboured hard to prove, either, that other poets of the fifteenth century have written as smoothly, or, if you will not allow him this, that Rowley was a prodigy, and wrote better than all his contemporaries; and that this is not at all incredible, it happening very frequently. And how, think you, gentle reader, he proves his first point? He produces some verses from Spenser, written about the year 1571; some from Sir John Cheke, written in 1553; and others from Sir H. Lea,

master of the Armoury to queen Elizabeth, These having not the smallest relation to the present question, I shall take no notice of them. He then cites some verses of blind Harry, (who knows not blind Harry?) written in the time of King Edward IV.; and some from *the Pilgrimage of the Soul*, printed by Caxton in 1483. I will not encumber my page by transcribing them; and will only observe, that they do not at all prove the point for which they are adduced, being by no means harmonious. But were these few verses ever so smooth, they would not serve to decide the matter in controversy. The question is not, whether in Chaucer, or any other ancient English poet, we can find a dozen lines as smooth as

“Winning she was, as is a jolly colt;

“Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt—

but whether we can find *three thousand* lines as smooth as these; containing the same rhythm, the very collocation and combination of words used in the eighteenth century.

Let us bring this matter to a very fair test. Any quotation from particular parts of old poetry is liable to suspicion, and may be thought to be selected by the advocates on one side as remarkably harmonious, or by those on the other as uncommonly rugged and uncouth. I will therefore transcribe the first four lines of as many ancient poems as are now lying before me; and I request that they may be compared

with

with the opening of *the Battle of Hastings*, N^o 1, the piece which happens to stand first in the new quarto edition of Chatterton's works.

Divested of its old spelling, which is only calculated to mislead the reader, and to assist the intended imposition, it begins thus:

" O Christ, it is a grief for me to tell
 " How many a noble earl and val'rous knight
 " In fighting for king Harold nobly fell,
 " All slain in Hastings' field, in bloody fight."

Or, as Chatterton himself acknowledged this to be a forgery, perhaps it will be more proper to quote the beginning of *the Battle of Hastings*, N^o 2, which he asserted to be a genuine, ancient composition:

" O Truth! immortal daughter of the skies,
 " Too little known to writers of these days,
 " Teach me, fair saint, thy passing worth to prize,
 " To blame a friend, and give a foeman praise."

The first four lines of *the Vision of Pierce Plowman*, by William (or Robert) Langland, who flourished about the year 1350, are as follows: [I quote from the edition printed in 1561:]

" In a summer season, when set was the sunne,
 " I shope me into throubs, as I a shepe were,
 " In habit as an hermet, unholye of werkes,
 " Went wide in the werlde, wonders to here."

Chaucer, who died in 1400, opens thus:

[Tyrwhitt's edit. 1775.]

" Whanne

“ Whanne that April with his shoures sote
 “ The droughte of March hath perced to the rote,
 “ And bathed every veine in swiche licour,
 “ Of whiche vertue engendred is the flour—.”

The *Confessio Amantis* of Gower, who died in 1402, begins thus: [Berthelette's edit. 1532.]

“ I maye not stretche uppe to the heven
 “ Myn honde, ne set al in even
 “ This worlde, whiche ever is in balaunce,
 “ It stant not in my suffisaunce—.”

Of Occleve's translation of Egidius *de Regimine principum*, not having it before me, I cannot transcribe the first lines. But here are the first that Mr. Warton has quoted from that poet, and he probably did not choose the worst. I should add, that Occleve wrote in the reign of King Henry V., about the year 1420:

“ Aristotle, most famous philosofre,
 “ His epistles to Alisaunder sent,
 “ Whos sentence is wel bet then golde in cofre,
 “ And more holsum, grounded in trewe entent—.”

The following is the first stanza of *the Letter of Cupide*, written by the same authour, and printed in Thynne's edition of Chaucer, 1561:

“ Cupide, unto whose commaundement
 “ The gentill kinrede of goddes on hie
 “ And people infernall ben obedient,
 “ And al mortal folke serven busely,
 “ Of the goddesse sonne Cythera onely,
 “ To al tho that to our deite
 “ Ben subjectes, hertely greting sende we.”

Of

Of John Lydgate's *Historie of Troye*, which was finished about the year 1420, this is the beginning: [edit. 1555.]

" O myghty Mars, that with thy sterne lyght
 " In armys hast the power and the myght,
 " And named arte from easte tyl occident
 " The myghty lorde, the god armipotent,
 " That with the shininge of thy streames rede
 " By influence dost the brydell lede
 " Of chivalrie, as foveraygne and patron—."

The Hystorie of King Boccus and Sydracke, &c. printed in 1510, and written by Hugh Campeden in the reign of Henry VI. i. e. some time between the year 1423 and 1461, begins thus:

" Men may finde in olde bookes,
 " Who soo yat in them lookes,
 " That men may mooche here,
 " And yerefore yff yat yee wolle lere—."

Of Thomas Chestre's poems, entitled *Sir Launfale*, written about the same time, these are the first lines:

" Le douzty Artours dawes
 " That held Engeland in good lawe,
 " Ther fell a wondyr cas
 " Of a ley that was yfette—."

The first lines that I have met with of Hardyng's *Chronicle of England unto the reigne of king Edward the Fourth*, in verse, [composed about the year 1470, and printed in 1543, 4to] are as follows:

" Truly

" Truly I heard Robert Ireliffe say,
 " Clarke of the Greens Cloth, and that to the household
 " Came every daye, forth most part alway,
 " Ten thousand folke, by his messes told—."

The following is the only specimen that I have seen of *The Ordinal*, a poem written by Thomas Norton, a native of Bristol, in the reign of King Edward IV.

" Wherefore he would set up in high
 " That bridge, for a wonderful fight,
 " With pinnacles guilt, slunynge as goulde,
 " A glorious thing for men to behoulde."

The poem on *Hawking, Hunting, and Armoury*, written by Julian Barnes in the reign of the same monarch, (about 1481,) begins thus:

" My dere sones, where ye fare, by frith, or by fell,
 " Take good hede in this tyme, how Tristram woll tell,
 " How many maner bestes of venery there were,
 " Listenes now to our dame, and ye shullen here."

The only extract that I have met with from William of Nassyngton's *Treatise on the Trinitie*, translated from John of Waldenby, about the year 1480, runs thus:

" I warne you first at the begynnynge,
 " That I will make no vaine carpynge,
 " Of dedes of armes, ne of amours,
 " As does Mynstrellis and Gestours—"

I cannot adhere to the method that I have in general observed, by quoting the first lines of

the Moral Proverbes of Christyne of Pyle, translated in metre by earl Rivers, and printed by Caxton in the seventeenth year of Edward IV. (1478), not having a copy of that scarce book. However, as this is the era of the pretended Rowley, I cannot forbear to transcribe the last stanza of that poem, as I find it cited in an account of this accomplished nobleman's works :

“ Of these sayynges Christyne was the auctresse,
 “ Which in makyn had such intelligence,
 “ That thereof she was mireur and maistresse;
 “ Her werkes testifie the experience;
 “ In Frensh language was written this sentence;
 “ And thus englisted doth hit reherse
 “ Antoin Wideville therle Ryvers.”

The first stanza of *the Holy Lyfe of Saynt Werburge*, written by Henry Bradshaw, about the year 1500, and printed in 1521, is this :

“ Whan Phebus had sonne his cours in sagittari,
 “ And Capricorne entred a sygne retrograt,
 “ Amyddes Decembre, the ayre colde and frosty,
 “ And pale Lucyna the erthe dyd illuminar,
 “ I rose up shortly fro my cubyle preparat,
 “ Aboute mydnyght, and cast in myne intent
 “ How I myght spende the tyme convenyent.”

Stephen Hawes's celebrated poem, entitled *the Passetyme of pleasure, or the Historie of Graunde Amour and La bell Pucell*, &c. (written about the year 1506, and printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1517,) being now before me, I am enabled to transcribe the first lines :

" When Phebus entred was in Geminy,
 " Shinyng above, in his fayre golden sphere,
 " And horned Dyane, then but one degre
 " In the crabbe had entred, fayre and cleare——."

Of the *Example of Virtue* *, written by the same
 authour, and printed by Wynkyn de Worde in
 1530, this is the first stanza :

" In September, in fallynge of the lese,
 " Whan Phebus made his inclynacyon,
 " And all the whete gadred was in the shefe,
 " By radyaunt hete and operacyon,
 " When the vyrgyn had full dominacyon,
 " And Dyane entred was one degre
 " Into the fygne of Gemyne——."

The first piece of Skelton, most of whose
 poems were written between 1509 and 1529, be-
 gins thus :

" Arrectynge my sight towarde the zodiake
 " The signes xii for to beholde a farre,
 " When Mars retrogaunt reversed his backe,
 " Lorde of the yere in his orbicular——."

The reader has now before him specimens of
 ancient poetry, during a period of near two hun-
 dred years ; that is, for a century before the pre-
 tended Thomas Rowley is said to have written,
 and for near a century afterwards. They are for
 the most part taken from the commencement of

* This very rare poem escaped the researches of the learned
 and ingenious Mr. Warton, who doubted whether it had ever
 been printed. See his *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, vol. II. p. 211.

the works of the several authours; so that there can be no suspicion of their having been selected, on account of their uncouthness, to prove a particular point. I know not whether I flatter myself; but by making these short extracts, I imagine that I have thrown more light upon the subject now under consideration, than if I had transcribed twenty pages of Junius, and as many of Skinner's *Etymologicon*, or Doomsday-book. Poetical readers may now decide the question for themselves; and I believe they will very speedily determine, that the lines which have been quoted from Chatterton's poems were not written at any one of the eras abovementioned, and will be clearly of opinion with Mr. Walpole, (whose unpublished pamphlet on this subject, printed at Strawberry Hill, shows him to be as amiable as he is lively and ingenious,) that this wonderful youth has indeed "copied ancient language, but ancient style he has never been able to imitate:" not for want of genius, for he was perhaps the second poetical genius that England has produced, but because he attempted something too arduous for human abilities to perform. My objection is not to single words, to lines or half-lines of these compositions (for here the advocates for their authenticity always shift their ground, and plead, that any particular exceptionable word or passage was the interpolation of Chatterton); but it is to their whole structure, style, and rythm. Many of the stones which this ingenious boy employed in his building, it must be acknowledged, are as old as

those at Stone-henge; but the beautiful fabrick that he has raised is tied together by modern cement, and is covered with a stucco of no older date than that of Mess. Wyat and Adams.

To be more particular : In what poet of the time of Edward IV., or for a century afterwards, will the Dean of Exeter find what we frequently meet with in the *Battle of Hastings*, N^o 1, and N^o 2, at the conclusion of speeches—"Thus he;"—"Thus Leofwine;"—"He said;" and as," &c? In none I am confident. This latter is a form of expression in heroick poetry, that Pope has frequently made use of in his *Homer* (from whence Chatterton undoubtedly copied it), and was sometimes employed by Dryden and Cowley; but I believe it will not be easy to trace it to Harrington or Spenser; most assuredly it cannot be traced up to the fifteenth century.—In what English poem of that age will he find similes dressed in the modern garb with which Chatterton has clothed them throughout these pieces?—"As when a flight of cranes, &c.—So prone," &c.—"As when a drove of wolves, &c. So fought," &c. &c.—If the reverend Antiquarian can find this kind of phraseology in any one poet of the time of King Edward IV., or even for fifty years afterwards, I will acknowledge the antiquity of every line contained in his quarto volume. Most assuredly neither he nor his colleague can produce any such instance. Even in the latter end of the *sixteenth* century, (a large bound from 1460,) poetical comparisons, of the kind here alluded to, were generally

rally expressed either thus—"Look how the crown that Ariadne wore, &c. So," &c. "Look how a comet at the first appearing, &c. So did the blazing of my blush," &c. "Look how the world's poor people are amazed, &c. So," &c.—Or thus; "Even as an empty eagle sharpe by fast, &c.—Even so," &c.—"Like as a taper burning in the darke, &c. So," &c.—Such is the general style of the latter end of the sixteenth century; though sometimes (but very rarely) the form that Chatterton has used was also employed by Spenser and others. In the preceding century, if I am not much mistaken, it was wholly unknown.

But I have perhaps dwelled too long on this point. Every poetical reader will find instances of modern phraseology in almost every page of these spurious productions. I will only add, before I quit the subject of style, that it is observable, that throughout these poems we never find a noun in the plural number joined with a verb in the singular; an offence against grammar which every ancient poet, from the time of Chaucer to that of Shakespeare, has frequently committed, and from which Rowley, if such a poet had existed, would certainly not have been exempted.

With respect to the stanza that Chatterton has employed in his two poems on the *Battle of Hastings*, Mr Bryant and the Dean of Exeter seem to think that they stand on sure ground, and confidently quote Gascoigne, to prove that such a stanza was known to our old English poets. "The greatest

part

part of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (says the latter gentleman, p. 30), and his *Legend of Good Women*, are in the decasyllabick couplet; but *in general* Lidgate's, Occleve's, *Rowley's*, Spenser's, and a great part of Chaucer's poetry, is written in stanzas of *seven, eight, or nine* decasyllabick lines; to which *Rowley* generally adds a tenth, and closes it with an *Alexandrine*. All these may be ranked under the title of RITHME ROYAL; of which Gascoigne, in his *INSTRUCTIONS FOR ENGLISH VERSE*, has given the following description: "Rithme Royal is a verse of ten syllables, and *seven* such verses make a staffe, whereof the first and third do answer acrosse in the terminations and rime; the second, fourth, and fifth, do likewise answer eche other in terminations; and the two last combine and shut up the sentence: this hath been called Rithme Royal, and surely it is a royal kind of verse, serving best for grave discourses." I leave it to the reverend Antiquarian to reconcile the contradictory assertions with which the passage I have now quoted sets out; and shall only observe, that we have here a great parade of authority, but nothing like a proof of the existence of such a stanza as Chatterton has used, in the time of K. Edward IV.; and at last the Commentator is obliged to have recourse to this flimsy kind of reasoning: "The different number of lines contained in the stanza makes no material alteration in the structure of this verse, the stanza always concluding with a couplet: in that of six lines, the four first rime alternately; in that of nine, wherein
Spenser

Spenser has composed his *Fairy Queen*, the sixth line rimes to the final couplet, and the seventh to the fifth : *Rowley having added another line to the stanza, the eighth rimes with the sixth.*—The upshot of the whole is, that Rowley himself, or rather Chatterton, is at last the only authority to show that such a stanza was employed at the time mentioned. And it is just with this kind of circular proof that we are amused, when any very singular fact is mentioned in Chatterton's verses : “ This fact, say the learned Commentators, is also minutely described by Rowley in the *YELLOW-ROLL*, which wonderfully confirms the authenticity of these poems ; ” i. e. one forgery of Chatterton in prose, wonderfully supports and authenticates another forgery of his in rhyme. — To prevent the Dean from giving himself any farther trouble in searching for authorities to prove that the stanza of the *Battle of Hastings* (consisting of two quatrains rhyming alternately, and a couplet,) was known to our early writers, I beg leave to inform him, that it was not used till near three centuries after the time of the supposed Rowley ; having been, if I remember right, first employed by Prior, who considered it as an improvement on that of Spenser.

II. The second point that I proposed to consider is, the imitations of Pope's Homer, Shakespeare, Dryden, Rowe, &c. with which these pieces abound. And here the cautious conduct of Chatterton's new commentator is very remarkable. All the similes that poor Chatterton bor-

rowed from Pope's or Chapman's Homer, to embellish his *Battle of Hastings*, are exhibited boldly; but then "they were all clearly copied from the original of the Grecian Bard," in whom we are taught, that Rowley was better read than any other man, during the preceding or subsequent century: but in the tragedy of *Ella*, and other pieces, where we in almost every page meet with lines and half-lines of Shakspeare, Dryden, &c. the reverend Antiquarian is less liberal of his illustrations. Indeed when the fraud is so manifest as not to be concealed, the passage is produced. Thus in *Ella* we meet

"My love is dead,

"Gone to her death-bed,

"All under the willow tree——"

and here we are told, "the burthen of this roundelay very much resembles that in Hamlet:"

"And will he not come again?

"And will he not come again?

"No, no, he is dead;

"Go to thy death-bed,

"He never will come again."

But when we meet—"Why thou art all that pointelle can bewreen"—evidently from Rowe—"Is she not more than painting can express?"—the editor is very prudently silent.

So also in the *Battle of Hastings* we find

"In

"In agonies and pain he then did lie,
"While life and death strove for the mastery—"

clearly from Shakspeare :

"That Death and Nature do contend about them,
"Whether they live or die."

So also in *Ella* :

"Fen-vapours blast thy every manly power!"

taken from the same author :

"As wicked dew as e'er my mother brushed

"With raven's feather from unwholesome fen,

"Light on you both !" [*Tempest*.]

"Ye fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,

"To fall and blast &c." [*King Lear*.]

Thus again in *Ella* :

"O thou, whate'er thy name, or Zabalus or Queede,

"Come steel my fable spright, for fremde and doleful

"deed—"

from the *Dunciad* :

"O thou, whatever title please thine ear,

"Dean, Drapier, &c."

But in all these, and twenty other places, not a word is said by the editor.—I am ashamed of taking up the time of my readers in discussing such points as these. Such plain and direct imitations

tions as Chatterton's, could scarcely impose on a boy of fifteen at Westminster School.

In the *Battle of Hastings* we meet

“ His noble soul came rushing from the wound —

from Dryden's Virgil—

“ And the disdainful soul came rushing through the wound—*”

and in Sir Charles Bawdin,

“ And tears began to flow ;” Dryden's very words in *Alexander's Feast*. But it was hardly possible, says the learned Commentator, for these thoughts to be expressed in any other words. Indeed ! I suppose five or six different modes of expressing the latter thought will occur to every reader.

Can it be believed, that every one of the lines I have now quoted, this gentleman maintains to have been written by a poet of the fifteenth century (for all that Chatterton ever did, according to his system, was supplying lacunæ, if there were any in the Mss., or modernizing a few antiquated phrases) ? He argues indeed very rightly, that the *whole* of these poems must have been written by *one* person. “ Two poets, (he observes, p. 81,) so distant in their æra [as Rowley and Chatterton], so different from each other in

* It is observable, that this is the last line of the translation of the *Æneid*.

their age and disposition, could not have united their labours [he *means*, their labours could not unite or coalesce] in the same poem to any effect, without such apparent difference in their style, language, and sentiments, as would have defeated Chatterton's intent of imposing his works on the public, as the original and entire composition of Rowley."—Most readers, I suppose, will more readily agree with his premises than his conclusion. Every part of these poems was undoubtedly written by one person; but that person was not Rowley, but Chatterton.

What reason have we to doubt, that he who imitated all the English poets with whom he was acquainted, likewise borrowed his Homerick images from the versions of Chapman and Pope; in the latter of which he found these allusions dressed out in all the splendid ornaments of the eighteenth century?

In the new commentary, indeed, on the *Battle of Hastings*, we are told again and again, that many of the similies which the poet has copied from Homer, contain circumstances that are found in the Greek, but omitted in Mr. Pope's translation. "Here therefore we have a certain proof that the authour of these poems could read Homer in the original *." But the youngest gownsmen at Oxford

* To show how very weak and inconclusive the arguments of Chatterton's new Editor are on this head, I shall cite but one passage, from which the reader may form a
 D 2 judgment

ford or Cambridge will inform the reverend critick, that this is a *non sequitur*; for the poet judgment of all the other illustrations with which he has decorated the *Battle of Hastings*:

—“ Siere de Broque an arrowe longe lett *flye*,
 “ Intending Herewaldus to have sleyne;
 “ It *miss’d*, but hytte Edardus on the eye,
 “ And at his pole came out with horrid payne.”

So Homer (says the Commentator):

—οἷόν τι ἀπὸ νευροφίης βάλλειν

“Εκδορος ἀνικρόν, βάλλειν δὲ ἰεῖτο θυμός·”

Καὶ τῷ μὲν ῥ’ ἀφάρμαδ’ ὁ δ’ ἀμύμονα Γοργυθίωνα

Τιδὸν εὖν Πριάμοιο, πᾶτά τ’ εἶδος βάλλειν ἴφ’.

Il. ©. v. 300.

“ He said, and twang’d the string, the weapon *flies*

“ At *Hector’s* breast, and sings along the skies;

“ He *miss’d* the mark, but pierc’d Gorgythio’s heart.”

POPE, B. viii. v. 365.

“ The imitation here seems to be very apparent, but it is the imitation of Homer, and not of Pope; both Homer and Rowley express the intention of the archer, which is dropped by the translator of the Greek poet.” Chatterton’s *Poems*, quarto, p. 83. Edit. Milles.

To my apprehension, the intention of the archer is very clearly expressed in Pope’s lines; but it is unnecessary to contest that point; for lo! thus has old Chapman translated the same passage:

“ This said, another arrow forth from his stiffe string he
 sent

“ At Hector, *whom he long’d to wound*; but still amisse
 it went;

“ His shaft smit faire Gorgythion.”

Of such reasoning is the new Commentary on Chatterton’s poems composed.

might

might have had the assistance of *other* translations, besides those of Pope; the English prose version from that of Madame Dacier, the translations by Chapman and by Hobbes. Nor yet will it follow from his having *occasionally* consulted *these* versions, that he was *not at all indebted to Pope*; as this gentleman endeavours to persuade us in p. 82. and 106. He availed himself, without doubt, of them all. Whenever the Commentator can show a single thought in these imitations of the Grecian Bard, that is found in the original, and not in *any* of those translations, I will readily acknowledge that *the Battle of Hastings*, and all the other pieces contained in his quarto volume, were written by Rowley, or Turgot, or Alfred the Great, or Merlin, or whatever other existent or non-existent ancient he or Mr. Bryant shall choose to ascribe them to. Most assuredly no such instance can be pointed out.

I do not however rest the matter here. What are we to conclude, if in Chatterton's imitations of Homer, we discover some circumstances that exist in Pope's translation, of which but very faint traces appear in the original Greek? Such, I believe, may be found. It is observable, that in all the similes we meet with many of the very rhymes that Pope has used. Will this Commentator contend, that the learned Rowley not only understood Homer, at a time when his contemporaries had scarcely heard of his name, but also foresaw in the reign of Edward IV. those additional

tional graces with which Mr. Pope would embellish him three hundred years afterwards?

III. The Anachronisms come next under our consideration. Of these also the modern-antique compositions which we are now examining, afford a very plentiful supply; and not a little has been the labour of the reverend Commentator to do away their force. The first that I have happened to light upon is in the tragedy of *Ella*, p. 212 :

“ She said, as her white hands white hosen were knitting,
“ What pleasure it is to be married !”

It is certain that the art of knitting stockings was unknown in the time of king Edward IV., the era of the pretended Rowley. This difficulty, therefore, was by all means to be gotten over. And whom of all men, think you, courteous reader, this sagacious editor has chosen as an authority to ascertain the high antiquity of this practice? No other than our great poet Shakspeare; who was born in 1564, and died in 1616. Poor Shakspeare, who gave to all the countries in the world, and to all preceding eras, the customs of his own age and country, he is the authour that is chosen for this purpose! “ If this Scotch art (says the Commentator) was so far advanced in a foreign country in the beginning of the sixteenth century, can there be a doubt of its being known in England half a century earlier? At least the art of knitting,

and weaving bone-lace, was *more ancient* than queen Elizabeth's time; for Shakspeare speaks of *old* and *antick* songs, which

"The spinsters and the *knitters* in the sun,

"And the free maids that *weave their thread with bone*,

"Did use to chaunt."

Twelfth Night, Act II. Sc. 4.

It might be sufficient to observe, that the old songs which were chaunted by the spinsters and knitters of Shakspeare's days, do not very clearly ascertain the antiquity of the *operation* on which they were employed; for I apprehend, though the art of knitting had not been invented till 1564, when the poet was born, the practisers of it might yet the very next day after it was known, sing ballads that were written a hundred years before.—In order, however, to give some colour to the forced inference that the commentator has endeavoured to extract from this passage, he has misquoted it; for Shakspeare does not say, as he has been represented, that the spinsters of old time *did* use to chaunt these songs: his words are,

"O fellow, come, the song we had last night;

"Mark it, Cefario, it is old and plain:

"The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,

"And the free maids that weave their thread with bones,

"Do use to chaunt it."

These lines, it must be acknowledged, prove that the art was *as* old as the time of Shakspeare,

speare, but not one hour *more* ancient; nor would they answer the Commentator's purpose, even if they had been uttered by Portia in *Julius Caesar*, by the Egyptian queen in *Antony and Cleopatra*, or by Nestor in *Troilus and Cressida*; for, as I have already observed, our great poet gave to all preceding times the customs of his own age.—If the learned editor should hereafter have occasion to prove, that *Dick* and *Hob* were common names at Rome, and that it was an usual practice of the populace there, two thousand years ago, to throw up their caps in the air, when they were merry, or wished to do honour to their leaders, I recommend the play of *Coriolanus* to his notice, where he will find proofs to this purpose, all equally satisfactory with that which he has produced from *Twelfth Night*, to show the antiquity of the art of knitting stockings in England.

Many of the poems and prose works attributed to Rowley, exhibit anachronisms similar to that now mentioned. Bristol is called a city, though it was not one till long after the death of king Edward IV. Cannynge is spoken of as possessing a *Cabinet* of coins and other curiosities*, a century
at

* Chatterton in his description of Cannynge's love of the arts, &c. seems often to have had Mr. Walpole in his eye; which was very natural, that gentleman being probably the first person who was at once a man of literature and rank, of whose character he had any knowledge.—Thus,
Mr.

at least before any Englishman ever thought of forming such a collection. *Drawings*, in the modern and technical sense of delineations on paper or vellum, with chalks or Indian ink, are mentioned a hundred and fifty years before the word was ever used with that signification. *Manuscripts* are noticed as rarities, with the idea at present annexed to them; and eagerly sought after and purchased by Rowley, at a time when printed books were not known, and when all the literature of the times was to be found in manuscripts alone. All these anachronisms *decisively* prove the spuriousness of these compositions. Other anachronisms may be traced in the poems before us, but they are of less weight, being more properly poetical deviations from *costume*. However I will briefly mention them. Tilts and tournaments are mentioned at a period when they were unknown. *God and my Right* is

Mr. W. having a very curious collection of pictures, prints, &c. Cannynge too must be furnished with a cabinet of coins and other rarities; and there being a private printing-press at Strawberry-Hill, (the only one perhaps in England,) the Bristol Mayor must likewise have one. It is in one of his letters that has not yet been printed, that Chatterton mentions his having read an account in the Rowley Mss. of Cannynge's intention to set up a *printing-press* at Westbury! This merchant died in 1474; during the greater part of his life printing was unknown; and even at the time of his death there was but one printing-press in this kingdom, namely, that set up by Caxton, in the Almonry of Westminster Abbey, about the year 1471.

the word used by duke William in *the Battle of Hastings*, though it was first used by king Richard I. after the victory at Grizors; and hatchments and armorial bearings, which were first seen at the time of the Croisades, are introduced in other places with equal impropriety.

One of Chatterton's earliest fictions was an ode or short poem of two or three stanzas in *alternate rhyme*, on the death of that monarch, which he sent to Mr. Walpole, informing him at the same time, that it had been found at Bristol with many other ancient poems. This, however, either C. or his friends thought proper afterwards to suppress. It is not, I believe, generally known, that this is the era which was originally fixed upon by this wonderful youth for his forgeries, though afterwards, as appears from Mr. Walpole's pamphlet already mentioned, having been informed that no such metres as he exhibited as ancient, were known in the age of Richard I., he thought proper to shift the era of his productions. It is remarkable, that one line yet remains in these poems, evidently written on the first idea :

“ Richard of lion's heart to fight *is* gone.”

“ It is very improbable, as the same gentleman observes, that Rowley, writing in the reign of Henry VI., or Edward IV., as is now pretended, or in that of Henry IV., as was assigned by the credulous, before they had digested their system, should incidentally, in a poem on another

ther subject, say, *now is Richard &c.*" Chatterton, having stored his mind with images and customs suited to the times he meant originally for the era of his fictitious ancient, introduced them as well as he could in subsequent compositions. One other singular circumstance, which I learn from the same very respectable authority, I cannot omit mentioning. Among the Mss. that Chatterton pretended to have discovered in the celebrated chest at Bristol was a painter's bill *, of which, like the rest, he produced only a copy. Great was the triumph of his advocates. Here was an undoubted relick of antiquity! And so indeed it was; for it was faithfully copied from the first volume of the *Anecdotes of Painting*, printed some years before; and had been originally transcribed by Vertue from some old parchments in the church of St. Mary Redcliffe at Bristol (a person, by the by, who was indefatigable in the pursuit of every thing that related to our ancient poets, and who certainly at the same time would have discovered some traces of the pretended Rowley, if any of his poetry had been lodged in that repository). Can there be a doubt, that he who was convicted of having forged this paper, and

* This fraud having been detected, we hear no more of it; but in the room of it has been substituted *A List of skyllde Paynters and Carvers*, which is now said to have been found along with the other Mss. and to be in the possession of Mr. Barret, of Bristol.

owned that he wrote the first *Battle of Hasting*, and the *Account of the ceremonies observed at the opening of the Old Bridge*, was the authour of all the rest also? Were he charged in a court of justice with having forged various notes, and clear evidence given of the fact, corroborated by the additional testimony of his having on a former occasion fabricated a Will of a very ancient date, would a jury hesitate to find him guilty, because two purblind old women should be brought into court, and swear that the Will urged against him had such an ancient appearance, the hand-writing and language by which the bequests were made was so old, and the parchment so yellow, that they could not but believe it to be a genuine deed of a preceding century?—But I have insensibly wandered from the subject of Anachronisms. So much, however, has been already said by others on this point, that I will now hasten to the last matter which I meant to consider, *viz.* the Mss. themselves, which are said to have contained these wonderful curiosities.

IV. And on this head we are told by Mr. B. that the hand-writing, indeed, is not that of any particular age, but that it is very difficult to know precisely the era of a Ms., especially when of great antiquity; that our kings wrote very different hands, and many of them such, that it is impossible to distinguish one from the other; and that the diminutive size of the parchments

on which these poems were written, (of which, I think, the largest that these Commentators talk of is eight inches and a half long, and four and a half broad*,) was owing to the great scarcity of parchment in former times, on which account the lines often appear in continuation, without regard to the termination of the verse.

Most of these assertions are mere *gratis dicta*, without any foundation in truth. I am not very well acquainted with the ancient Mss. of the fourteenth or fifteenth century: but I have now before me a very fair Ms. of the latter end of the sixteenth century, in which the characters are as regular and uniform as possible. If twenty Mss. were produced to me, some of that era, and others of eras prior and subsequent to it, I would undertake to point out the hand-writing of the age of queen Elizabeth, which is that of the Ms. I speak of, from all the rest; and I make no doubt that persons who are conversant with the hand-writing of preceding centuries, could with equal precision ascertain the age of more ancient Mss. than any that I am possessed of. But the truth is, (as any one may see, who accurately examines the *fac simile* exhibited originally by Mr. Tyrwhitt in his edition of these poems, and now again by the

* At the bottom of each sheet of old deeds (of which there were many in the Bristol chest) there is usually a blank space of about four or five inches in breadth. C. therefore found these slips of discoloured parchment at hand.

Dean of Exeter in the new edition of them,) that Chatterton could not, accurately and for any continuance, copy the hand-writing of the fifteenth century; nor do the Mss. that he produced exhibit the hand-writing of *any* century whatever. He had a turn for drawing and emblazoning; and he found, without doubt, some ancient deeds in his father's old chest. These he copied to the best of his power; but the hand-writing usually found in deeds is very different from the current hand-writing of the same age, and from that employed in transcribing poems. To copy even these deeds to any great extent, would have been dangerous, and have subjected him to detestation. Hence it was, that he never produced any parchment so large as a leaf of common folio.—What we are told of the great scarcity of parchment formerly, is too ridiculous to be answered. Who has not seen the various beautiful Mss. of the works of Gower and Chaucer, in several publick and private libraries, on parchment and on vellum, a small part of any one of which would have been sufficient to contain all the poems of Rowley, in the manner in which they are pretended to have been written?—But any speculation on this point is but waste of time. If such a man as Rowley had existed, who could troul off whole verses of Shakspeare, Dryden, and Pope, in the middle of the fifteenth century, he would have had half the parchment in the kingdom at his command; statues would have been erected to him

him as the greatest prodigy that the world had ever seen ; and in a few years afterwards, when printing came to be practised, the presses of Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde would have groaned with his productions.

Much stress is laid upon Chatterton's having been seen frequently writing, with old crumpled parchments before him. No doubt of the fact. How else could he have imitated old hands in *any* manner, or have been able to form even the few pretended originals that he did produce? But to whom did he ever show these old MSS. when he was transcribing them? To whom did he ever say---“ Such and such characters denote such letters, and the verse that I now show you in this old parchment is of this import?” Whom did he call upon, knowing in ancient hands, (and such undoubtedly he might have found,) to establish, by the testimony of his own eyes, the antiquity, not of one, but of all these MSS? If an ingenuous youth (as Mr. W. justly observes), “ enamoured of poetry, had really found a large quantity of old poems, what would he have done? Produced them cautiously, and one by one, studied them, and copied their style, and exhibited sometimes a genuine, and sometimes a fictitious piece? or blazed the discovery abroad, and called in every lover of poetry and antiquity to participation of the treasure? The characters of imposture are on every part of the story; and were it true, it would still remain one of those improbable wonders, which we have no reason for believing.”

What

What has been said already concerning forged compositions, cannot be too often repeated. If these Mss. or any part of them exist, why are they not deposited in the British Museum, or some publick library, for the examination of the curious? Till they are produced, we have a right to use the language that Voltaire tells us was used to the Abbé Nodot. "Show us your Ms. of Petronius, which you say was found at Belgrade, or consent that nobody shall believe you. It is as false that you have the genuine satire of Petronius in your hands, as it is false that that ancient satire was the work of a consul, and a picture of Nero's conduct. Desist from attempting to deceive the learned; you can only deceive the vulgar."

Beside the marks of forgery already pointed out, these poems bear yet another badge of fraud, which has not, I believe, been noticed by any critick. Chatterton's verses have been shown to be too smooth and harmonious to be genuine compositions of antiquity: they are liable at the same time to the very opposite objection; they are too old for the era to which they are ascribed. This sounds like a paradox; yet it will be found to be true. The versification is too modern; the language often too ancient. It is not the language of any particular period of antiquity, but of *two entire centuries*.... This is easily accounted for. Chatterton had no other means of writing old language, but by applying to glossaries and dictionaries, and these

comprise all the antiquated words of preceding times; many provincial words used perhaps by a northern poet, and entirely unknown to a southern inhabitant; many words also, used in a singular sense by our ancient bards, and perhaps by them only once. Chatterton drawing his stores from such a copious source, his verses must necessarily contain words of various and widely-distant periods. It is highly probable, for this reason, that many of his lines would not have been understood by one who lived in the fifteenth century.—That the diction of these poems is often too obsolete for the era to which they are allotted *, appears clearly from hence; many of them are much more difficult to a reader of this day, without a glossary, than any one of the metrical compositions of the age of Edward IV. Let any person, who is not very

* Mr. Bryant seems to have been aware of this objection, and thus endeavours to obviate it. “Indeed in some places the language seems more obsolete than could be expected for the time of king Edward the Fourth; and the reason is, that some of the poems, however new modelled, were prior to that era. For *Rowley himself* [i. e. Chatterton] tells us that he borrowed from Turgot; and we have reason to think that *he* likewise copied from Chedder.” This same Chedder, he acquaints us in a note, was “a poet mentioned in *the Mss.*, [that is, in Chatterton’s *Mss.*, for I believe his name is not to be found elsewhere,] who is supposed to have flourished about the year 1330. He is said [by Chatterton] to have had some *maumeries* at the *comitatus* of the city.” *Observations*, p. 553. I wonder the learned commentator did not likewise inform us, from the same *unquestionable authority*, what wight *Maistre* Chedder copied.

profoundly skilled in the language of our elder poets, read a few pages of any of the poems of the age of that king, from whence I have already given short extracts, without any glossary or assistance whatsoever; he will doubtless meet sometimes with words he does not understand, but he will find much fewer difficulties of this kind, than while he is perusing the poems attributed to Rowley. The language of the latter, without a perpetual comment, would in most places be unintelligible to a common reader. He might, indeed, from the context, *guess* at something like the meaning; but the lines, I am confident, will be found, on examination, to contain twenty times more obsolete and obscure words than any one poem of the age of king Edward IV, now extant.

Before I conclude, I cannot omit to take notice of two or three particulars on which the Dean of Exeter and Mr. Bryant much rely. The former, in his Dissertation on *Ella*, says, "Whatever claim might have been made in favour of Chatterton as the author [of *the Battle of Hastings*], founded either on his own unsupported and improbable assertion, or on the supposed possibility of his writing these two poems, assisted by Mr. Pope's translation [of Homer], no plea of this kind can be urged with regard to any other poem in the collection, and least of all to the dramatick works, or the tragedy of *Ella*; which required not only an
eleva-

elevation of poetic genius far superior to that possessed by Chatterton, but also such moral and mental qualifications as never entered into any part of his character or conduct, and which could not possibly be acquired by a youth of his age and inexperience." "Where (we are triumphantly asked) could he learn the nice rules of the Interlude, by the introduction of a chorus, and the application of their songs to the moral and virtuous object of the performance?"—Where?—from Mr. Mason's *Elfrida* and *Caractacus*, in which he found a perfect model of the Greek drama, and which doubtless he had read. But ELLA "*inculcates the precepts of morality*;" and Chatterton, it is urged, was idle and dissolute, and therefore could not have been the authour of it. Has then the reverend editor never heard of instances of the purest system of morality being powerfully enforced from the pulpit by those who in their own lives have not been always found to adhere rigidly to the rules that they laid down for the conduct of others? Perhaps not; but I suppose many instances of this kind will occur to every reader. The world would be pure indeed, if speculative and practical morality were one and the same thing. "That knowledge of times, of men, and manners," without which, it is said, *Ella* could not have been written, I find no difficulty in believing to have been possessed by this very extraordinary youth. Did he

not, when he came to London, instead of being dazzled and confounded by the various new objects that surrounded him, become in a short time, by that almost intuitive faculty which accompanies genius, so well acquainted with all the reigning topicks of discourse, with the manners and different pursuits of various classes of men, with the state of parties, &c. as to pour out from the press a multitude of compositions on almost every subject that could exercise the pen of the oldest and most experienced writer *? He who could do this, could compose

* The following notices, which Mr. Walpole has preserved, are too curious to be omitted. They will give the reader a full idea of the professed authorship of Chatterton. In a list of pieces written by him, but never published, are the following:

5. "TO LORD NORTH. A Letter signed the MODERATOR, and dated May 26, 1770, beginning thus: "My Lord—It gives me a painful pleasure, &c.—This (says Mr. W.) is an encomium on administration for rejecting the Lord Mayor Beckford's Remonstrance.

6. *A Letter to Lord Mayor Beckford*, signed PROBUS, dated May 26, 1770,—This is a violent abuse of Government for rejecting the Remonstrance, and begins thus: "When the endeavours of a spirited people to free themselves from an insupportable slavery"—On the back of this essay, which is directed to Chatterton's friend, Cary, is this indorsement:

"Accepted by Bingley—set for and thrown out of *The North Briton*, 21 June, on account of the Lord Mayor's death.

Lost by his death on this Essay	- - -	1	11	6
Gained in Elegies	- - -	2	2	0
— in Essays	- - -	3	3	0
Am glad he is dead by	- - -	3	13	6"

the tragedy of *ELLA* *: (a name, by the by, that he probably found in Dr. Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, Vol. I. p. xxiv.)

Almost every part of the Dissertation on this tragedy is as open to observation as that now mentioned. It is not true, as is asserted, (p. 175.) that the *rythmical tales*, before called *tragedies*, first assumed a regular dramattick form in the time of king Edward IV. These melancholy tales went under the name of tragedies for above a century afterwards. Many of the pieces of Drayton were called *tragedies* in the time of Queen Elizabeth, though he is not known to have ever written a single drama. But without staying to point out all the mistakes of the reverend critick on this subject, I recommend to those readers who wish to form a decided opinion on these poems, the same test for the tragedy of *Ella* that I have already suggested for the *Battle of Hastings*. If they are not furnished with any of our dramattick pieces in the original editions, let them only cast their eyes on those ancient interludes which take up the greater part of Mr. Hawkins's first volume of

* Chatterton wrote also "a *Manks Tragedy*," which, if his forgeries had met with a more favourable reception than they did, he would doubtless have produced as an ancient composition. With the ardour of true genius, he wandered to the untrodden paths of the little Isle of Man for a subject, and aspired

petere inde coronam,

Unde prius nulli velarint tempora Musa.

The

The Origin of the English Drama (the earliest of them composed in 1512); and I believe they will not hesitate to pronounce *Ella* a modern composition. The dramas which are yet extant (if they can deserve that name), composed between the years 1540 and 1570, are such wretched stuff, that nothing but antiquarian curiosity can endure to read a page of them. Yet the period I speak of is near a century after the era of the pretended Rowley.

The argument of Mr. B. on this subject is too curious to be omitted: "I am sensible (says he, in his *Observations*, p. 166,) that the plays mentioned above [the Chester Mysteries] seem to have been confined to religious subjects.—But though the monks of the times confined themselves to these subjects, it does not follow that people of more learning and genius were limited in the same manner. As plays certainly existed, the plan might sometimes be varied; and the transition from sacred history to profane, was very natural and easy. Many generous attempts may have been made towards the improvement of the rude drama, and the introduction of compositions on a better model: but the ignorance of the monks, and the depraved taste of the times, may have prevented such writings being either countenanced or preserved. It may be said, that we have no examples of any compositions of this sort. But this is begging the question, while we have the plays of *Ælla* and *Godwin* before

fore us. The former is particularly transmitted to us as Rowley's *." I believe no reader will be at a loss to determine, who it is that in this case begs the question. Here we have another remarkable instance of that kind of circular proof of which I have already taken notice.

In the multitude of topicks agitated by these commentators, I had almost forgot one, much relied upon by the last-mentioned gentleman. It is the name of *Widdeville*, which, we are informed, (p. 317.) is written in all the old chronicles *Woodville*; and the question is triumphantly asked, "how could Chatterton, in his *Memoirs of Cannyng*, [*Miscell.* p. 119.] vary from all these chronicles?—Where could he have found the name of *Widdeville* except in one of those manuscripts to which we are so much beholden?" If the learned commentator's book should arrive at a second edition, I recommend it to him to cancel this page (as well as a former, in which he appears not to have known that "*happy man be his dole!*" is a common expression in Shakspeare, and for his ignorance of which he is forced to make an awkward apology in his Appendix); and beg leave to inform him, that Chatterton found the name of *Widdeville* in

* In the same manner argues the learned pewterer of Bristol, Mr. George Catcott. These poems are certainly genuine, "for Rowley himself mentions them in the *YELLOW ROLL*." See his letter in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. XLVIII. p. 348.

a very modern, though now scarce, book, the *Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England**, by Mr. Walpole, every one of whose works most assuredly Chatterton had read.

The names of the combatants in *the Battle of Hasting*, an enumeration of which takes up one third of this commentator's work, and which, he tells us, are only to be found in Doomsday-book and other ancient records that Chatterton could not have seen, have been already shown by others to be almost all mentioned in Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, and the *Chronicles* of Holinshed and Stowe. And what difficulty is there in supposing that the names not mentioned in any printed work (if any such there are) were found in the old deeds that he undoubtedly examined, and which were more likely to furnish him with a catalogue of names than any other ancient muniment whatsoever? It is highly probable also, that in the same chest which contained these deeds, he found some old Diary of events relating to Bristol, written by a mayor or alderman of the fifteenth century, that furnished him with some account of Rowley and Cannyng, and with those circumstances which the commentators say are only to be traced in William de Worcester. The practice of keeping diaries was at that time very general, and continued to be much in use to the middle of the last century. This, it must be owned, is

* See the first volume of that entertaining work, p. 67; art. *Antony Widville, Earl Rivers*.

a mere hypothesis, but by no means an improbable one.

I cannot dismiss this gentleman without taking notice of a position which he has laid down, and is indeed the basis of almost all the arguments that he has urged to prove the authenticity of the Bristol Mss. It is this; that as every authour must know his own meaning, and as Chatterton has sometimes given wrong interpretations of words that are found in the poems attributed to Rowley, he could not be the authour of those poems.

If Chatterton had originally written these poems, in the form in which they now appear, this argument might in a doubtful question have some weight. But although I have as high an opinion of his abilities as perhaps any person whatsoever, and do indeed believe him to have been the greatest genius that England has produced since the days of Shakspeare, I am not ready to acknowledge that he was endued with any miraculous powers. Devoted as he was from his infancy to the study of antiquities, he could not have been so conversant with ancient language, or have had all the words necessary to be used so present to his mind, as to write antiquated poetry of any considerable length, off hand. He, without doubt, wrote his verses in plain English, and afterwards embroidered them with such old words as would suit the sense and metre. With these he furnished himself, sometimes probably from memory, and sometimes from glossaries; and annexed such

interpretations as he found or made. When he could not readily find a word that would suit his metre, he invented one * If then his old words afford some sense, and yet are sometimes interpreted wrong, nothing more follows than that his glossaries were imperfect, or his knowledge inaccurate; (still however he might have had a confused, though not complete, idea of their import :) if, as the commentator asserts, the words that he has explained not only suit the places in which they stand, but are often more apposite than he imagined, and have a latent and significant meaning, that never occurred to him, this will only show, that a man's book is sometimes wiser than himself; a truth of which we have every day so many striking instances, that it was scarcely necessary for this learned antiquarian to have exhibited a new proof of it.

Let it be considered too, that the glossary and the text were not always written at the same time; that Chatterton might not always remember the precise sense in which he had used antiquated words; and from a confused recollection, or from the want of the very same books that he had consulted while he was writing his poems, might add sometimes a false, and sometimes an

* In Chatterton's poems many words occur, that were undoubtedly coined by him; as *mole, dolce, droke, glytted, aluste*, &c. All these his new editor has inserted in a very curious performance which he is pleased to call a Glossary, *with such interpretations as the context supplied*, without even attempting to support them either by analogy or the authority of our ancient writers.

imperfect,

imperfect, interpretation.—This is not a mere hypothesis ; for in one instance we know that the comment was written at some interval of time after the text. “The glossary of the poem entitled *the Englysh Metamorphosis* (Mr. Tyrwhitt informs us) was written down by C. extemporally, without the assistance of any book, at the desire and in the presence of Mr. Barrett.”

I have here given this objection all the force that it can claim, and more perhaps than it deserves ; for I doubt much whether in Chatterton's whole volume six instances can be pointed out, where he has annexed false interpretations to words that appear when rightly understood to suit the context, and to convey a clear meaning : and these mistakes, if even there are so many as have been mentioned, are very easily accounted for from the causes now assigned.

Perhaps it may be urged, that when I talk of the manner in which these poems were composed, I am myself guilty of the fault with which I have charged others, that of assuming the very point in controversy ; and the observation would be just, if there were not many collateral and decisive circumstances, by which Chatterton is clearly proved to have written them. All these concurring to show that he forged these pieces, an investigation of the *manner* in which he forged them, cannot by any fair reasoning be construed into an assumption of the question in dispute.

Great stress is also laid by this commentator on some variations being found in the copies of

these poems that were produced by Chatterton at different times; or, to use his own words, "there is often a material variation between the copy and the original, which never could have happened if he had been the author of both *." He must have known his own writing, and would not have deviated from his own purpose."

—Thus in one copy of *the Song to Ella*, which C. gave to Mr. Barrett, these lines were found:

"Or seest the hatched feed,

"*Ifrayning* o'er the mead,"

Being called upon for the original, he the next day produced a parchment, containing the same poem, in which he had written *yprauencing*, instead of *ifrayning*; but by some artifice he had obscured the MS. so much, to give it an ancient appearance, that Mr. B. could not make out the word without the use of galls.—What follows from all this, but that C. found on examination that there was no such word as *ifrayning*, and that he substituted another in its place? In the same poem he at one time wrote *locks—burlie—brasting—and kenneft*; at another, *bairs—valiant—bursting—and bearest*. Variations of this kind he could have produced without end.—These commentators deceive themselves, and use a language that for a moment may deceive others, by talking of one read-

* So that an author cannot revise or correct his works without forfeiting his title to them!—According to this doctrine, Garth was the author of only the *first* copy of *the Dispensary*, and all the subsequent editions published in his life-time, in every one of which there were material variations, must be attributed to some other hand.

ing

ing being found in the *copy*, and another in the *original*, when in fact all the Mss. that C. produced were equally originals. What he called originals indeed, were probably in general more perfect than what he called copies; because the former were always produced after the other, and were in truth nothing more than second editions of the same pieces*.

The inequality of the poems which Chatterton owned as his own compositions, when compared with those ascribed to Rowley, has been much insisted upon. But this matter has been greatly exaggerated. Some of the worst lines in Chatterton's *Miscellanies* have been selected by Mr. Bryant to prove the point contended for; but in fact they contain the same even and flowing versification as the others, and *in general* display the same premature abilities†.—The truth is, the
readers

* “*Bie*,” which he wrote inadvertently in the tragedy of *ELLIA*, instead of “*mie*,” (on which Mr. B. has given us a learned dissertation) — “*Bie* thanks I ever onne you wyll bestowe” — is such a mistake as every man in the hurry of writing is subject to. *By* had probably occurred just before, or was to begin some subsequent line that he was then forming in his mind. Even the slow and laborious Mr. Capel, who was employed near forty years in preparing and printing an edition of Shakspeare, in a Catalogue which he presented to a publick library at Cambridge, and which he probably had revised for many months before he gave it out of his hands, has written “*Bloody Bloody*,” as the title of one of Fletcher's Plays, instead of “*Bloody Brother*.”

† The observations on this subject, of the ingenious author of the accurate account of Chatterton, in a book entitled

readers of these pieces are deceived insensibly on this subject. While they are perusing the poems of the fictitious Rowley, they constantly compare them with the poetry of the fifteenth century; and are ready every moment to exclaim, how much he surpasses all his contemporaries. While the verses that Chatterton acknowledged as his

titled *Love and Madness*, are too pertinent to be here omitted. "It may be asked why Chatterton's own Miscellanies are inferior to Rowley? Let me ask another question: Are they inferior? Genius, abilities, we may bring into the world with us; these rare ingredients may be mixed up in our compositions by the hand of Nature. But Nature herself cannot create a human being possessed of a complete knowledge of our world almost the moment he is born into it. Is the knowledge of the world which his Miscellanies contain, no proof of his astonishing quickness in seizing every thing he chose? Is it remembered when, and at what age, Chatterton for the first time quitted Bristol, and how few weeks he lived afterwards? Chatterton's Letters and Miscellanies, and every thing which the warmest advocate for Rowley will not deny to have been Chatterton's, exhibit an insight into men, manners, and things, for the want of which, in their writings, authors who have died old men, with more opportunities to know the world, (who could have less than Chatterton?) have been thought to make amends by other merits."—"In London (as the same writer observes) was to be learned that which even genius cannot teach, the knowledge of life. Extemporaneous bread was to be earned more suddenly than even Chatterton could write poems for Rowley; and, in consequence of his employments, as he tells his mother, publick places were to be visited, and mankind to be frequented."—Hence, after "he left Bristol, we see but one more of Rowley's poems, *The Ballad of Charitie*, and that a very short one."

OWN,

own, are passing under their eyes, they still recollect that they are the productions of a boy of seventeen; and are slow to allow them even that merit which they undoubtedly possess. "They are ingenious, but puerile; flowing, but not sufficiently correct."——The best way of convincing the antiquarian reader of the merit of these compositions, would be to disfigure them with old spelling; as perhaps the most complete confutation of the advocates for the authenticity of what are called Rowley's poems would be to exhibit an edition of them in modern orthography.—Let us only apply this very simple test,—“handy-dandy let them change places,” and I believe it would puzzle even the President of the Society of Antiquaries himself to determine, “which is the justice, and which is the thief;” which is the pretended ancient, and which the acknowledged modern.

Of this double transformation I subjoin a short specimen; which is not selected on account of any extraordinary spirit in the lines that precede, or uncommon harmony in those that follow, but chosen (agreeably to the rule that has been observed in all the former quotations) merely because the *African Eclogue* happens to be the *first* poetical piece inserted in Chatterton's acknowledged *Miscellanies*.

I. CHATTERTON *in Masquerade.*

NARVA AND MORED: AN AFRICAN ECLOGUE.

[From Chatterton's *Miscellanies*, p. 56.]

- " Recyte the loves of Narva and Mored,
 " The preeſte of Chalmas trypell ydolle ſayde.
 " Hie fro the grounde the youthful heretogs ^a ſprunge,
 " Loude on the concave ſhelle the launces runge:
 " In al the myſterke ^b maizes of the daunce
 " The youths of Bannies brennyng ^c ſandes advaunce;
 " Whiles the mole ^d vyrgin brokkyng ^e lookes behinde,
 " And rydes uponne the penyons of the winde;
 " Aſlighes ^f the mountaines borne ^g, and meaſures
 rounde
 " The ſteeple clifſtes of Chalmas hallie ^h grounde."

^a Warriors. ^b myſtick. ^c burning. ^d uſed by Chatterton for ſoft or tender. ^e panting. ^f aſcends. ^g brow, or ſummit. ^h holy.

II. CHATTERTON *Unmasked.*

ECLOGUE THE FIRST.

[From Rowley's Poems, quarto, p. 391.]

- " When England ſmoking from her deadly wound,
 " From her gall'd neck did twitch the chain away,
 " Seeing her lawful ſons fall all around,
 " (Mighty they fell, 'twas Honour led the fray,)
 " Then in a dale, by eve's dark furcoat gray,
 " Two lonely ſhepherds did abruptly fly,

" (The

“(The rustling leaf does their white hearts affray,)

“And with the owlet trembled and did cry :

“First Robert Neatherd his fore bosom struck,

“Then fell upon the ground, and thus he spoke.”

If however, after all, a little inferiority should be found in Chatterton's acknowledged productions, it may be easily accounted for. Enjoin a young poet to write verses on any subject, and after he has finished his exercise, show him how Shakspeare, Dryden, and Pope, have treated the same subject. Let him then write a second copy of verses, still on the same theme. This latter will probably be a *Cento* from the works of the authours that he has just perused. The one will have the merit of originality; the other a finer polish and more glowing imagery. This is exactly Chatterton's case. The verses that he wrote for Rowley are *perhaps* better than his others, because they contain the thoughts of our best poets often in their own words. The versification is equally good in both. Let it be remembered too, that the former were composed at his leisure in a period of near a year and a half; the latter in about four months, and many of them to gain bread for the day that was passing over him.

After his arrival in London, if his forgeries had met with any success, he would undoubtedly have produced ancient poetry without end; but perceiving that the gentleman in whom he expected

to find at once a dupe and a patron, was too clear-sighted to be deceived by such evident fictions, and that he could earn a livelihood by his talents, without fabricating old Mss. in order to gain a few shillings from Mess. Barrett and Catcott, he deserted his original plan, and we hear little more of Rowley's verses.

With regard to the time in which the poems attributed to this priest were produced, which it is urged was much too short for Chatterton to have been the inventor of them, it is indeed astonishing that this youth should have been able to compose, in about eighteen months, three thousand seven hundred verses, on various subjects; but it would have been still more astonishing, if he had transcribed in that time the same number of lines, written on parchment, in a very ancient hand, in the close and indistinct manner, in which these poems are pretended to have been written, and defaced and obliterated in many places*:—unless he had been endued with the faculty of a celebrated solicitor, who being desired a few years

* Let those who may be surprised at this assertion, recollect the wonderful inventive faculties of Chatterton, and the various compositions, both in prose and verse, which he produced after his arrival in London, in the short space of four months; not to mention the numerous pieces, which he is known to have written in the same period, and which have not yet been collected—Let them likewise examine any one of the defaced Mss. of the fifteenth century, in the Cotton Library, and see in what time they can transcribe a dozen lines from it.

ago in the House of Lords to read an old deed, excused himself by saying that it was *illegible*, informing their lordships at the same time that he would make out a fair *copy* of it against the next day. Chatterton, I believe, understood better how to make fair copies of illegible parchments, than to read any ancient manuscript whatsoever.

It is amusing enough to observe the miserable shifts to which his new editor is forced to have recourse, when he is obliged to run full tilt against matters of fact.—Thus Chatterton, we find, owned that he was the authour of the first *Battle of Hastings*; but we are not to believe his declaration, says Mr. Thistlethwaite, whose doctrine on this subject the reverend commentator has adopted. “Chatterton thought himself not sufficiently rewarded by his Bristol patrons, in proportion to what his communications deserved.” He pretended, therefore, “on Mr. Barrett’s repeated solicitations for the original [*of the Battle of Hastings*], that he himself wrote that poem for a friend; thinking, *perhaps*, that if he parted with the original poem, he might not be properly rewarded for the loss of it. *”—As if there was no other way for him

* Chatterton’s Poems, quarto, edit. Milles, p. 458.

It was not without good reason that the editor was solicitous to disprove Chatterton’s frank confession, respecting this poem; for he perceived clearly that the style, the colouring, and images, are nearly the same in this, and the second poem with the same title, and that every reader of any discernment must see at the first glance, that he who wrote the first *Battle of Hastings* was the authour of all

him to avoid being deprived of a valuable ancient MS. but by saying that it was a forgery, and that he wrote it himself!—What, however, did he do immediately afterwards? No doubt, he avoided getting into the same difficulty a second time, and subjecting himself again to the

the other poems ascribed to Rowley.—It is observable that Chatterton in *the Battle of Hastings*, N° 2, frequently imitates himself, or repeats the same images a second time. Thus in the first poem with this title we meet

—“ he dying gryp'd the recer's limbe;
 “ The recer then beganne to flynge and kicke,
 “ And toste the erlie farr off to the grounde:
 “ The erlie's squier then a swerde did sticke
 “ Into his harte, a dedlie ghaistlie wounde;
 “ And downe he felle upon the crymson pleine,
 “ Upon Chatillion's souleless corse of claie.”

In the second *Battle of Hastings* are these lines:

“ But as he drewe his bowe devoid of arte,
 “ So it came down upon Troyvillain's horse;
 “ Deep thro hys hatchments wente the pointed floe;
 “ Now here, now there, with rage bleedinge he rounde
 doth goe.
 “ Nor does he hede his mastres known commands,
 “ Tyll, growen furiose by his bloudie wounde,
 “ Erect upon his hynder feete he staundes,
 “ And throwes hys mastre far off to the grounde.

Can any one for a moment doubt that these verses were all written by the same person?—The circumstance of the wounded horse's falling on his rider, in the *first* of these similes, is taken directly from Dryden's Virgil, *Æn.* X. v. 1283.—Chatterton's new editor has artfully contrasted this passage of Dryden with the *second* simile, where that circumstance is *not* mentioned,

same

same importunity from his ungenerous Bristol patrons, by showing them no more of these rarities? Nothing less. The very same day that he acknowledged this forgery, he informed Mr. Barrett that he had another poem, the copy of an original by Rowley; and at a *considerable interval of time* (which indeed was requisite for writing his new piece) he produced *another* BATTLE OF HASTINGS, much longer than the former; a fair copy from an undoubted original.—He was again, without doubt, pressed by Mr. B. to show the original Ms. of this also; and, according to Mr. Thistlethwaite's system, he ought again to have asserted that *this* poem likewise was a forgery; and so afterwards of every copy that he produced.---Can any person that considers this transaction for a moment entertain a doubt that all these poems were his own invention?

Again:---We have the positive testimony of Mr. John Ruddall, a native and inhabitant of Bristol, who was well acquainted with Chatterton, when he was a clerk to Mr. Lambert, that *the Account of the ceremonies observed at the opening of the Old Bridge*, published in Farley's Journal, Oct. 1. 1768, and said to be *taken from an ancient Ms.*, was a forgery of Chatterton's, and acknowledged by him to be such. Mr. Ruddall's account of this transaction is so material, that I will transcribe it from the Dean of Exeter's new work, which perhaps many of my readers may not have seen:---“During
 1 that

that time, [while C. was clerk to Mr. L.] Chatterton frequently called upon him at his master's house, and soon after he had printed the account of the bridge in the Bristol paper, told Mr. Ruddall, that he was the author of it; but *it occurring to him afterwards*, that he might be called upon to produce the original, he brought to him one day a piece of parchment about the size of a half-sheet of fool's-cap paper: Mr. Ruddall does not think that any thing was written on it when produced by Chatterton, but he saw him write several words, if not lines, in a character which Mr. Ruddall did not understand, which he says was totally unlike English, and as he apprehends was meant by Chatterton to imitate or represent the original from which this account was printed. He cannot determine precisely how much Chatterton wrote in this manner, but says, that the time he spent in that visit did not exceed three quarters of an hour: the size of the parchment, however, (even supposing it to have been filled with writing) will in some measure ascertain the quantity which it contained. He says also, that when Chatterton had written on the parchment, he held it over the candle, to give it the appearance of antiquity, which changed the colour of the ink, and made the parchment appear black and a little contracted*."

* See the new edition of Chatterton's poems, quarto, p. 436, 437.

Such is the account of one of Chatterton's intimate friends. And how is this decisive proof of his abilities to imitate ancient English handwriting, and his exercise of those abilities, evaded? Why truly, we are told, "the *contraction of the parchment* is no discriminating mark of antiquity; the *blackness* given by smoke appears upon trial to be very different from the *yellow tinge* which parchment acquires by age; and *the ink does not change its colour*, as Mr. Ruddall seems to apprehend." So, because these arts are not always *completely successful*, and would not deceive a very skilful antiquary, we are to conclude, that Chatterton did not forge a paper which he acknowledged to have forged, and did not in the presence of Mr. Ruddall cover a piece of parchment with ancient characters for the purpose of imposition, though the fact is clearly ascertained by the testimony of that gentleman!--The reverend commentator argues on this occasion much in the same manner, as a well-known versifier of the present century, the facetious Ned Ward (and he too published a quarto volume of poems). Some biographer, in an account of the lives of the English poets, had said that "he was an ingenious writer, considering his low birth and mode of life, he having for some time kept a publick house in the City." "Never was a greater or more impudent calumny (replied the provoked rhymist); it is very well known to every body.

body, that my publick house is not in the *City*, but in *Moorfields*.”—In the name of common sense, of what consequence is it, whether in fact *all* ancient parchments are *scrivelled*; whether smoke will give ink a *yellow* appearance or not. It is sufficient, that Chatterton *thought* this was the case; that he made the *attempt* in the presence of a credible witness, to whom he *acknowledged* the purpose for which the manœuvre was done. We are asked indeed, why he did not prepare his pretended original before he published the copy. To this another question is the best answer. Why is not fraud always uniform and consistent, and armed at all points? Happily for mankind it scarcely ever is. Perhaps (as Mr. Ruddall’s account seems to state the matter) he did not think at first that he should be called upon for the original: perhaps he was limited in a point of time, and could not fabricate it by the day that the new bridge was opened at Bristol.—But there is no end of such speculations. Facts are clear and incontrovertible. Whatever might have been the cause of his delay, it is not denied that he acknowledged this forgery to his friend Mr. Ruddall; conjuring him at the same time not to reveal the secret imparted to him. If this had been a mere frolick, what need of this earnest injunction of secrecy?—His friend scrupulously kept his word till the year 1779, when, as the Dean of Exeter informs us, “on the prospect of procuring a gratuity

gratuity of ten pounds for Chatterton's mother, from a gentleman who sought for information concerning her son's history, he thought so material a benefit to the family would fully justify him for divulging a secret, by which no person living could be a sufferer."

I will not stay to take notice of the impotent attempts that Chatterton's new commentators have made to overturn the very satisfactory and conclusive reasoning of Mr. Tyrwhitt's Appendix to the former edition of the fictitious Rowley's Poems. That most learned and judicious critick wants not the assistance of my feeble pen: *Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis*——. If he should come into the field himself (as I hope he will), he will soon silence the Anglo-Saxon batteries of his opponents.

The principal arguments that have been urged in support of the antiquity of the poems attributed to Rowley, have now, if I mistake not, been fairly stated and examined*. On a

* I take this opportunity of acknowledging an error into which I have fallen in a former page (13), where it is said, that *no* instances are found in these poems of a noun in the plural number being joined to a verb in the singular. On a more careful examination I observe that C. was aware of this mark of antiquity, and that his works exhibit a *few* examples of this disregard to grammar. He has however sprinkled them too sparingly. Had these poems been written in the fifteenth century, Priscian's head would have been broken in almost every page, and I should not have searched for these grammatical inaccuracies in vain.

review of the whole, I trust the reader will agree with me in opinion, that there is not the smallest reason for believing a single line of them to have been written by any other person than Thomas Chatterton; and that, instead of the towering motto which has been affixed to the new and splendid edition of the works of that most ingenious youth---*Renascentur quæ jam cecidere*---the words of Claudian would have been more "germane to the matter:"

*tolluntur in altum,
Ut lapsu graviore ruant.*

Having, I fear, trespassed too long on the patience of my readers, in the discussion of a question that to many may appear of no great importance, I will only add the following serious and well-intended proposal. I do humbly recominend, that a committee of the friends of the reverend antiquarian, Dr. Jeremiah Milles, Dean of Exeter, and the learned mythologist, Jacob Bryant, Esq., may immediately meet;---that they may, as soon as possible, convey the said Dr. M. and Mr. B. together with Mr. George Catcott, pewterer, and Mr. William Barrett, surgeon, of Bristol, and Dr. Glynn of Cambridge, to the room over the north porch of Redcliffe church, and that on the door of the said room *six* padlocks may be fixed:---that in order to wean these gentlemen by

by degrees from the delusion under which they labour, and to furnish them with some amusement, they may be supplied with proper instruments to measure the length, breadth, and depth, of the empty chests now in the said room, and thereby to ascertain how many thousand diminutive pieces of parchment, all eight inches and a half by four and a half, might have been contained in those chests; [according to my calculation, 1,464,578;—but I cannot pretend to be exact:] that for the sustenance of these gentlemen, a large peck loaf may be placed in a *maund* basket in the said room, having been previously prepared and left in a damp place, so as to become mouldy, and the words and figures *Thomas Flour, Bristol, 1769*, being first impressed in common letters on the upper crust of the said loaf, and on the under side thereof, in Gothick Characters, *Thomas Wheateley, 1464* (which Thomas Wheateley Mr. Barrett, if he carefully examines Rowley's PURPLE ROLL *, will find was an *auncyent* baker, and “*did use to bake daieily for Maister Canynge twelve manchettes of chete breade, and foure douzenne of marchpanes*,” and which custom of impressing the names of bakers upon bread, I

* ROWLEY's *Purple Roll*, Mr. Bryant very gravely tells us, is yet extant in manuscript in his *own hand-writing*. “It is (he adds) in *two* parts; *one* of the said parts written by Thomas Rowley, and *the other* by Thomas Chatterton.”

can prove to be as ancient as the time of king Edward IV., from Doomsday-book, William de Wircestre, Shakspeare, and other good antiquarians, as also from the Green and Yellow Rolls, now in Mr. B's custody) * :---that a proper quantity of water may be conveyed into the forementioned room in one of Mr. Catcott's deepest

* A learned friend, who, by the favour of Mr. Barrett, has perused the YELLOW ROLL, informs me, that Rowley, in a treatise dated 1451, and addressed "to the dygne Maister Canynge," with the quaint title, *DE RE FRUMENTARIA*, (chap. XIII. *Concernynge Horse-boeing Husbandrie, and the Dryll-Ploughe*) has this remarkable passage: "Me thynketh ytt were a prettie devyee yffe this practyce of oure bakerres were extended further. I mervaille moche, our *scriveynes* and *amanuenses* doe not gette lytel letters cutt in wood, or caste in yron, and thanne followynge by the eye, or with a fescue, everyche letter of the boke thei meane to copie, fix the sayde wooden or yron letters meetelie disposed in a frame or chafe; thanne daube the same over with somme atramentous stufte, and layinge a thynne piece of moistened parchment or paper on these letters, presse it doune with somme smoothe stone or other heavie weight: by the whiche goodlye devyce a manie hundreth copies of eche boke might be wroughte off in a few daies, instead of employing the eyen and hondes of poore clerkes for several monthes with greate attentyon and travaile."

This great man, we have already seen, had an idea of many of the useful arts of life some years before they were practised. Here he appears to have had a confused notion of that noble invention, the printing-press. To prevent misconstruction, I should add, that *boke* in the above passage means *manuscript*, no other books being then known. In other parts of his works, as represented by Chatterton, he speaks

deepest and most ancient pewter plates, together with an ewer of Wedgwood's ware, made

speaks of Mss. as contradistinguished from books; but in all those places it is reasonable to suppose some interpolation by Chatterton, and *those who choose it*, may read *book* instead of *manuscript*; by which this trivial objection to the authenticity of these pieces will be removed, and these otherwise discordant passages rendered perfectly uniform and consistent.

This valuable relick shows with how little reason the late Mr. Tull claimed the merit of inventing that useful instrument of husbandry, the drill-plough.

I make no apology for anticipating Mr. Barret on this subject; as in fact these short extracts will only make the publick still more desirous to see his long-expected *History of Bristol*, which I am happy to hear is in great forwardness, and will, I am told, contain a full account of the YELLOW ROLL, and an exact inventory of *Maistre William Cannynges*'s Cabinet of coins, medals, and drawings, (among the latter of which are enumerated many, highly finished, by Apelles, Raphael, Rowley, Rembrant, and Vandyck) together with several other matters equally curious.—It is hoped that this gentleman will gratify the publick with an accurate engraving from a drawing by Rowley, representing the ancient Castle of Bristol, together with the square tower cyleped the DONGEON, which cannot fail to afford great satisfaction to the purchasers of his book, as it will exhibit a species of architecture hitherto unknown in this country; this tower (as we learn from unquestionable authority, that of the Dean of Exeter himself,) “being remarkably decorated [on paper] with images, ornaments, tracery work, and crosses within circles, *in a style not usually seen in these buildings*.”—Chatterton, as soon as ever he heard that Mr. Barrett was engaged in writing a history of Bristol, very obligingly searched among the Rowley papers, and a few days afterwards furnished him with a neat copy of this ancient drawing.

after

after the oldest and most uncouth pattern that has yet been discovered at Herculaneum;---that Dr. Glynn, if he shall be thought to be sufficiently composed (of which great doubts are entertained), be appointed to cut a certain portion of the said bread for the daily food of these gentlemen and himself; and that, in order to sooth in some measure their unhappy fancies, he may be requested, in cutting the said loaf, to use the valuable knife of Mr. Shiercliffe (now in the custody of the said Dr. G), the history * of which has so much illustrated, and so clearly evinced the antiquity of the poems attributed to Thomas Rowley. And if in a fortnight after these gentlemen have been so confined, they shall be found to be entirely re-established in their health, and perfectly composed, I recommend that the six locks may be struck off, and that they all may be suffered to return again to their usual employments.

* This very curious and interesting history may be found in Mr. Bryant's *Observations*, &c. p. 512. The learned commentator seems to have had the great father of poetry in his eye, who is equally minute in his account of the sceptre of Achilles. See *Il. A.* v. 234. He cannot, however, on this account be justly charged with plagiarism; these co-incidences frequently happening. Thus Rowley in the 15th century, and Dryden in the 17th, having each occasion to say that a man wept, use the same four identical words—"Tears began to flow."

F I N I S.



NEW BOOKS published by J. NICHOLS,

PRINTER to the SOCIETY of ANTIQUARIES,

at Cicero's Head, Red-Lion-Passage, Fleet-Street;

and sold by ALL the Booksellers in Great Britain and Ireland.

In a handsome Quarto, adorned with a Variety of elegant Plates,

BIBLIOTHECA TOPOGRAPHICA BRITANNICA.

Nº I. containing, 1. **QUERIES** for illustrating the Antiquities and Natural History of **GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND**: 2. The History of **TUNSTALL in KENT**, by the late Rev. **EDWARD-ROWE MORES**. Price 5s. sewed.

Nº II. Part I. containing **RELIQUIÆ GALEANÆ**; or, Miscellaneous Pieces by the late learned Brothers **ROGER and SAMUEL GALE**; with Biographical Memoirs, and a Pedigree of their Family. Price 2s. 6d. stitched.

Nº II. Part II. A Continuation of the **RELIQUIÆ GALEANÆ**; containing the Epistolary Correspondence of the **GALES** with their learned Contemporaries. Price 5s. sewed. — To the Third Part, which will contain a Continuation of their Correspondence, will be prefixed an Account of the **LITERARY SOCIETY at SPALDING**.

Nº III. A Description of the Chanonry in **OLD ABERDEEN**, in the Years 1724 and 1725, together with many curious, entertaining, and pleasant Remarks on the said Town, &c. by **WILLIAM OREM**, Town Clerk of Aberdeen. Illustrated by a large and accurate Survey of Old and New Aberdeen, with the adjacent Country between the Rivers **Dee and Don**. Price 5s. sewed.

* * * The **SURVEY** may be had separately, Price 1s.

Nº IV. Memoirs of Sir **JOHN HAWKWOOD**, Price 2s. stitched.

* * The Histories of **HINCKLEY** in Leicestershire, of **CROYDON** in Surrey, of the Hospital of **St. KATHARINE** by the Tower, and many other Articles, are getting forward, and will soon be published as subsequent Numbers of the **BIBLIOTHECA**.

V. Biographical Anecdotes of **WILLIAM HOGARTH**; and a Catalogue of his Works chronologically arranged; with occasional Remarks. By **J. NICHOLS**. Octavo, Price 3s. sewed.

VI. A Select Collection of Poems; with Notes Biographical and Historical, by **J. NICHOLS**. In Four Volumes, small Octavo, Price 10s. 6d. in Boards.

☛ The Four concluding Volumes, which will contain many original Poems, and a General Poetical Index, are nearly finished, and will very soon be published.

NEW BOOKS published by J. NICHOLS.

VII. LETTERS on several Subjects; GENIUS, WIT, TASTE, DELICACY, LONDON, MUSIC, SHAKSPEARE, THE FRENCH, FOREIGN TRAVEL, &c. &c. By the Rev. MARTIN SHERLOCK, M.A. Domestic Chaplain to the Earl of BRISTOL, and Vicar of Castleconnor and Killglass in Ireland. In Two Volumes, small Octavo, Price 5s. sewed.—Either Volume may be had separately.

VIII. Letters of an ENGLISH TRAVELLER [MARTIN SHERLOCK, M.A.] In Two Volumes, Crown Octavo, Price 5s. sewed; or either Volume, singly, 2s. 6d.

IX. Four New Editions of the Supplement to SWIFT'S Works; with explanatory Notes on All the former Volumes, and a complete General Index, by J. NICHOLS.

1. In One Volume, Quarto, Price One Guinea, sewed.

2. In Two Volumes, large Octavo, Price Twelve Shillings, sewed.

3. In Three Volumes, small Octavo, Price Twelve Shillings, sewed.

4. In Three Volumes XVIII^o. Price Six Shillings, sewed.

*** The latter Volumes of EITHER Edition may be had separately, to complete Sets.

X. SWIFT'S Works, COMPLETE, in XXVII Volumes, in a small Pocket Size, Price Two Guineas sewed; the cheapest Edition of SWIFT hitherto published.

XI. PROPERTII MONOBIBAOE: or that Book of the Elegies of PROPERTIUS intituled CYNTHIA; translated into English Verse; with Classical Notes. Pr. 2s. 6d.

XII. HARDYKNUTE, AN HEROIC BALLAD. Now first published complete; with the other more approved SCOTTISH BALLADS, and some not hitherto made Public, in the TRAGIC STYLE.

To which are prefixed,

Two Dissertations, I. On the Oral Tradition of Poetry. II. On the Tragic Ballad.

*** This Volume is printed in the same Size as Dean PERCY'S "Reliques," Price 2s. 6d. sewed.

XIII. A Repertory of the Endowments of Vicarages in the Dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester. By Dr. DUCAREL, F.R. and A.S.S. Commissary of the City and Diocese of Canterbury. Octavo, Price 3s. 6d.

XIV. Biographical Memoirs of WILLIAM GED; including a particular Account of his Progress in the Art of Block-Printing. Printed for the Benefit of his Daughter. Octavo. Price 1s.

XV. *In the Press, and speedily to be published, in Two Volumes, Octavo,*

THE CORRESPONDENCE (LITERARY and POLITICAL) of Dr. ATTERBURY, Bishop of ROCHESTER; in which will be included many Original Letters.